

**In the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. New material is indicated by an underline, deleted material is indicated by a ~~striketrough~~.

1. (Previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a mammalian immunodeficiency virus glycoprotein (gp) 120 polypeptide, wherein said gp120 polypeptide comprises a deletion of hypervariable loop 3 (V3), and further comprises a compensatory mutation, wherein said compensatory mutation is an amino acid substitution from threonine to alanine at amino acid residue number 391, wherein the amino acid residue number of said compensatory mutation is relative to the amino acid sequence of parental HIV-2/vcp gp120 as provided in SEQ ID NO:5.

2. (Previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said mammalian immunodeficiency virus is human immunodeficiency virus type 2 (HIV-2).

3. (Original) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 2, wherein said mammalian immunodeficiency virus is HIV-2.

4. (Previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 3, wherein said deletion of V3 is a deletion of from about amino acid residue number 303 to amino acid residue number 324 ( $\Delta V3(6,6)$ ) relative to the amino acid sequence of HIV-2/vcp gp120 as provided in SEQ ID NO:5.

5-9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 4, wherein said V3 deletion is  $\Delta V3(6,6)$ .

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a mammalian immunodeficiency virus glycoprotein (gp) 120 polypeptide wherein said gp120 polypeptide comprises a deletion of hypervariable loop 3 (V3) and further comprises a compensatory mutation wherein the nucleic acid sequence of said nucleic acid is the sequence of SEQ ID NO:44 8.

13. (Previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 12, wherein said deletion is from about amino acid residue number 303 to amino acid residue number 324 ( $\Delta$ V3(6,6)), relative to the amino acid sequence of HIV-2/vcp gp120 as provided in SEQ ID NO:5.

14-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein the amino acid sequence of said gp120 polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid is the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:11.

17-72. (Canceled)